



# Beef Business

► A look at current issues affecting the cattle industry. Compiled by *Shauna Rose Hermel*

## DOT exempts livestock from hours-of-service requirement

On June 6 the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) granted a one-year exemption to the hours-of-service requirement for the transportation of livestock. The hours-of-service rules required all commercial motor vehicle operators, including livestock transporters, to take a 30-minute rest break for every eight hours of service. This is in addition to all scheduled stops not counting time for refueling and other breaks.

National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) President and Victoria, Texas, cattleman Bob McCan said the move alleviates many of the concerns of cattlemen and women as they face warmer temperatures this summer.

"This is great news for livestock producers and for the health of our herds," said McCan. "As we come into summer, cattle producers have expressed concerns to the DOT that these rules would jeopardize the health and safety of our cattle. For over a year this has been a major priority for the NCBA and our members, but we will continue to urge DOT to make this exemption permanent. This exemption is a commonsense move that keeps our herds and our nation's highways safe."

The hours-of-service exemption will be effective immediately. More information can be found on the DOT website, [www.dot.gov](http://www.dot.gov).

Source: NCBA.

## Comment period extended for Clean Water Rule

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) extended the time available to comment on new clean water rules, a victory for farming families, says American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) President Bob Stallman.

"EPA has misled the regulated community about the rule's impacts on land use. If more people knew how regulators want to require permits for common activities on dry land, or penalize landowners for not getting them, they would be outraged," Stallman said in an official statement. "This latest rule broadly expands federal jurisdiction and threatens local land-use and zoning authority. Simply put, it is an end run around Congress and the Supreme Court."

Producers have until Oct. 20 to comment on the Waters of the United States rule and until July 7 to comment on the accompanying interpretive rule.

Source: AFBF.

## WRRDA signed into law June 10

Signing of the *Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014* (WRRDA) into law June 10 puts America's inland waterways and port infrastructure on a solid and sustainable foundation to contribute to U.S. economic growth, jobs and global competitiveness for generations to come, according to AFBF.

"The American Farm Bureau Federation and our 6 million member families have long championed an efficient and reliable inland waterway system linked to competitive ports," said Stallman. "The ports, channels, locks, dams and other infrastructure that support our waterways transportation are vital to America's ability to provide affordable agricultural products at home and abroad," he said.

U.S. waterways transport 60% of the nation's export-bound grain, supply American farmers with fertilizer for planting season and provide a competitive advantage against producers of farm goods outside the nation's borders.

Implementation of the waterways law will result in \$6 billion in total cost savings and important reforms to ensure the reliability and strength of the nation's inland waterways and ports.

The law contains the majority of Farm Bureau's priorities, including improvements to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) and the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF). It also establishes minimum authorization levels for the HMTF and requires 100% of funds to be spent on port infrastructure improvements by 2025.

The IWTF federalizes 85% of the costs associated with the Olmsted Locks and Dam project freeing up more than \$100 million annually to be utilized for other priority projects on the waterways system. This is an increase from the current 50/50 split between federal dollars and funds paid by users into the IWTF.

The law also includes provisions related to the Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures Rule, allowing self-

certification by a farmer of more on-farm fuel storage, up to 6,000 gallons.

Source: AFBF.

## TAHC adopts cattle tuberculosis rules, proposes changes to trichomoniasis program

At its regularly scheduled meeting in Austin, Texas, May 13, the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) adopted several rules and proposed changes to others along with corresponding comment periods.

The following rules applying to cattle were adopted effective June 3:

### ► Chapter 43, Tuberculosis, Authorized Calf Ranch/Grower Facility.

This rule creates a new section establishing standards, procedures and other requirements for young dairy cattle exposed to tuberculosis, which may be fed in drylot facilities approved by TAHC called "authorized calf ranches/grower facilities."

### ► Chapter 43, Tuberculosis, Mexican Origin Cattle.

This rule requires Texas veterinarians to include a statement on any official document issued by the veterinarian for cattle that originated from Mexico (M-branded) stating that "the cattle represented on this document are of Mexican origin."

### ► Chapter 51, Entry Requirements, Mexican Origin Cattle, and Definition Change.

This rule requires veterinarians in other states creating official documents on cattle that originated in Mexico (M-branded) and are intended for entry into Texas to include a statement that "the cattle represented on this document are of Mexican origin."

The TAHC will be accepting public comments through 5 p.m. July 7, 2014, on the following rules proposed May 13:

### ► Chapter 38, Trichomoniasis, Testing/ Herd Certification.

The purpose of these amendments is to change trichomoniasis (trich) testing and herd certification requirements. The proposed amendments would ...

—add testing requirements for a herd of origin when a bull from the herd is sold and subsequently found to be infected with trich.

—require testing when a bull is separated from its unit of origin,

such as when a bull is found on property not owned by the owner/caretaker of the bull (stray), and that bull is found to be infected with trich. Under the proposal, the pasture (unit) of origin, and pasture where the stray trich bull was located will both be placed under hold order, and any additional bulls located there must be tested for trich.

—allow TAHC to evaluate the effectiveness of a herd control plan for an infected herd leading to the possible continuation or disapproval of the herd plan based on the

progress or lack of progress made in controlling the disease within the herd.

—require herds enrolled in the Trich Herd Certification Program to have perimeter fences that are adequate to prevent the ingress or egress of cattle.

► **Chapter 39, Scabies and Mange Mites, New Chapter/Repeal.** The purpose of the proposed new chapter is to replace the existing chapter and make substantial changes regarding the requirements and treatment standards for livestock infested with or exposed to scabies or mange mites.

► **Chapter 45, Reportable Diseases, Novel Swine Enteric Coronavirus.** The purpose of the proposed amendment is to add Novel Swine Enteric Coronavirus Disease (SECD) to the list of reportable diseases. SECD is a disease in swine caused by emerging porcine coronaviruses, which include but are not limited to porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDv) and porcine delta coronavirus (PDCoV).

The TAHC will be accepting public comments through 5 p.m., Monday, July 21, 2014, on the following rule proposed May 13:

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**► Chapter 51, Entry Requirements,**

**Cattle.** The proposed amendment will clarify the bovine trich entry requirements and testing exemptions. The proposal adds new testing exemptions for out-of-state bulls enrolled in a Texas bull test station trial and for out-of-state bulls originating from approved certified trich-free herd programs.

**► Chapter 51, Entry Requirements,**

**Swine.** The proposed amendments will require accredited veterinarians to include a statement on health certificates issued on non-commercial swine entering Texas for purposes other than immediate slaughter, which should state

that, “The swine on this certificate have not originated from a premises known to be affected by SECD and have not been exposed to SECD within the last 30 days.”

To view details of all the rules that were adopted, visit [www.tahc.state.tx.us/regs/code.html](http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/regs/code.html). Explanations of the rule proposals are available at [www.tahc.state.tx.us/regs/proposals.html](http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/regs/proposals.html). Comments on the proposed regulations must be submitted in writing to Carol Pivonka, Texas Animal Health Commission, 2105 Kramer Lane, Austin, Texas 78758; by fax at 512-719-0719; or by email to [comments@tahc.texas.gov](mailto:comments@tahc.texas.gov). For more information, visit [www.tahc.texas.gov](http://www.tahc.texas.gov) or call 1-800-550-8242.

Source: *TAHC.*

**NCBA president testifies to the value of trade**

NCBA President Bob McCan testified June 11 before of the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee expressing the benefits of expanding agricultural trade and eliminating barriers to U.S. exports.

“The elimination of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers is a top priority for the U.S. beef industry, and I strongly encourage you to work with the administration to craft current and future trade agreements based on free market, science-based principles,” McCan said.

Beef demand continues to increase around the world. In 2013, foreign consumers purchased 1.17 million metric tons of U.S.

beef at a total of \$6.1 billion. According to CattleFax, exports accounted for \$307 per head of fed cattle in 2013.

“With 96% of the world’s consumers living outside of the U.S., access to foreign markets is vital for the future success of U.S. beef producers and rural America,” McCan said. “For NCBA, the elimination of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers is a top priority for the U.S. beef industry. If there is one industry that has witnessed both the benefits and tragedies of U.S. trade policy it is the U.S. beef industry.”

In 1993, U.S. beef exports to Mexico were valued at \$116 million. As a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Mexico eliminated its 15% tariff

on live-cattle slaughter, the 20% tariff on chilled beef and the 25% tariff on frozen beef. In 2013, Mexico is now our third-largest export market, valued at nearly \$1 billion.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a new agreement that includes Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam and the United States. NCBA believes TPP has the potential to open a number of export opportunities for the U.S. beef industry but is currently limited by Japan.

“Japan’s unwillingness to abide by the principles of free trade threatens the entire process,” said McCan. “We encourage USTR (U.S. Trade Representative) to remain vigilant

and to continue to push the Japanese toward tariff elimination on beef.”

*Source: NCBA.*

### **Ag groups differ in reaction to EPA greenhouse gas plan**

If implemented, the EPA’s latest greenhouse gas proposal will harm the nation’s economy, rural communities and America’s farm and ranch families, according to the AFBF. The EPA’s attempt to impose a 30% reduction in carbon dioxide by 2030 on the nation’s power plants will lead to higher energy prices. In addition to higher prices for electricity, farmers would face increased prices for any energy-related input — such as

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fertilizer. Rural electric cooperatives that rely on old coal plants for cheap electricity would be especially hard hit.

“U.S. agriculture will pay more for energy and fertilizer under this plan, but the harm won’t stop there,” AFBF President Bob Stallman said. “Effects will especially hit home in rural America.”

“The greenhouse gas proposal is yet another expensive and expansive overreach by EPA into the daily lives of America’s farmers and ranchers,” Stallman said. “Our

farmers and ranchers need a climate that fosters innovation, not unilateral regulations that cap our future.”

National Farmers Union (NFU) President Roger Johnson had a different take on the issue.

“The changing climate has already begun to affect agriculture, and it is clear that weather volatility will only continue to increase in the coming years unless our policymakers proactively address this challenge,” said Johnson, commending the

administration for its leadership on climate change mitigation. “I encourage Congress and the administration to engage the agricultural community in reducing carbon pollution by creating voluntary incentives for sequestering carbon and implementing conservation strategies that preserve our limited soil and water resources.”

Johnson urged EPA to withdraw its proposal to “undermine” the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), returning the 2014 biofuels

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target to its statutory levels, and to recognize the importance of rural electric cooperatives to their communities.

“Co-ops provide power to 42 million Americans and account for 12% of total U.S. electricity sales,” said Johnson. “Any regulatory action must consider the impact on rural electrics and the communities they serve.”

Sources: AFBF and NFU.

### USDA announces funding, issues federal order to combat PEDv

In response to the significant impact porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDv) and porcine deltacoronavirus (PDCoV) are having on U.S. pork producers, the USDA June 5 announced \$26.2 million in funding to combat the diseases. Additionally, USDA issued a Federal Order requiring the reporting of new detections of these viruses to its Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) or state animal health officials.

These viruses do not pose any risk to human health or food safety, and they are commonly detected in countries around the world.

“In the last year, industry has estimated PEDv has killed some 7 million piglets and caused tremendous hardship for many American pork producers,” said Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack. “The number of market-ready hogs this summer could fall by more than 10% relative to 2013 because of PEDv. Together with industry and our state partners, the steps we will take through the

Federal Order will strengthen the response to PEDv and these other viruses and help us lessen the impact to producers, which ultimately benefit the consumers who have seen store pork prices rise by almost 10% in the past year.”

The \$26.2 million will be used for a variety of activities to support producers and combat these diseases, including:

- ▶ \$3.9 million to be used by USDA’s Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to support the development of vaccines;
- ▶ \$2.4 million to cooperative agreement funding for states to support management and control activities;
- ▶ \$500,000 to herd veterinarians to help with development and monitoring of herd management plans and sample collection;
- ▶ \$11.1 million in cost-share funding for producers of infected herds to support biosecurity practices;
- ▶ \$2.4 million for diagnostic testing; and
- ▶ \$1.5 million to National Animal Health Laboratory Network diagnostic laboratories for genomic sequencing for newly positive herds.

APHIS’ Federal Order requires producers, veterinarians and diagnostic laboratories to report all cases of PEDv and other new swine enteric coronavirus diseases to USDA and state animal health officials. The industry is already seeing herds previously impacted by the virus become re-infected. Routine and standard disease reporting will help identify

the magnitude of the disease in the United States and can help determine whether additional actions are needed.

The Federal Order also requires that operations reporting these viruses work with their veterinarian or USDA or state animal health officials to develop and implement a reasonable management plan to address the detected virus and prevent its spread. Plans will be based on industry-recommended best practices and include disease monitoring through testing and biosecurity measures. These steps will help to reduce virus shed in affected animals, prevent further spread of the disease, and enable continued movement of animals for production and processing.

For full details of the Federal Order and program requirements, along with a Q&A on this topic, visit the APHIS website, [www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health/secd](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health/secd).

Source: USDA.

### Institute named OIE collaborating center

The National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense (recently renamed the Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases [IIAD]) has been recognized as a collaborating center in the specialty of biological threat reduction for the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). This designation was made at the 82nd General Session of the OIE in Paris, France.

The OIE is the intergovernmental organization responsible for improving animal health worldwide. It is recognized as a reference organization by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and has 180 member countries. The OIE maintains permanent relations with 51 international and regional organizations and has regional and sub-regional offices on every continent.

OIE collaborating centers represent expertise in a specific sphere of competence relating to animal health issues. As a collaborating center, IIAD will provide its expertise internationally to support and implement animal health initiatives, provide scientific and technical training, and conduct scientific research focused on global animal health. There are more than 40 collaborating centers worldwide, working in areas related to animal health, including animal welfare, food safety, vaccine development and disease surveillance. With this designation, IIAD becomes the only biological threat reduction center in the OIE’s Americas region and the only OIE collaborating center within the Texas A&M University System.

To learn more about IIAD, visit <http://iiad.tamu.edu>. For more information on OIE, visit [www.oie.int/](http://www.oie.int/).

## RESEARCH UPDATE

### Repeatability of calving difficulty

Many producers are looking back through their calving books to re-examine the most recent calving season and determine if improvements can be made between now and next spring. At a recent Oklahoma extension event, a cow-calf producer asked the time-honored question: “If a heifer has calving difficulty this year, what is the likelihood that she will have trouble again next year?”

A look back through the scientific literature sheds some light on this subject. Research conducted by Colorado State University and published in 1973 looked at parturition records of 2,733 Hereford calves sired by 123 bulls and born to 778 cows/heifers. (Source: Brinks, et al., *Journal of Animal Science*, 1973:Vol. 36, pp. 11-17). A repeatability estimate was obtained from heifers calving both as 2- and 3-year-olds. The estimate was 4.5%. Of 195 heifers that had no difficulty in calving at 2 years of age, 7.2% had difficulty as 3-year-olds. Of the 77 2-year-old heifers that experienced calving difficulty, 11.7% had difficulty again as 3-year-olds.

Heifers that experienced calving difficulty as 2-year-olds weaned 59% of calves born, whereas those having no difficulty weaned 70% of calves born. Calving difficulty as 2-year-olds affected the number of calves weaned when 3 years of age and also the weaning weight of those calves.

Heifers having calving difficulty as 2-year-olds weaned a 63% calf crop as 3-year-olds. Heifers having no difficulty as 2-year-olds weaned a 77% calf crop as 3-year-olds.

From this research we learned that calving difficulty as a 2-year-old has a profound effect on productivity. The likelihood that calving difficulty will happen again next year is only slightly greater than in heifer counterparts that calved unassisted this year.

— by Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cow-Calf Corner newsletter, OSU Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist